

## 2002 CROP SUMMARY

Minnesota experienced a winter that was warmer than usual in 2002. During January much of the state experienced above normal temperatures, which produced excellent feeding conditions for farmers. The unseasonably warm weather and lack of snow cover created concern for the alfalfa and winter wheat crop, but allowed fall fieldwork to be completed. February brought much of the same conditions. Livestock were in good shape across the state. The lack of snow cover caused wind erosion concerns, but thanks to the warm temperatures, farmers were able to focus on agricultural planning and education.

Due to snow and ice storms across much of the state, spring planting excitement came to a sudden halt in March. The March storms added much needed moisture to the soil profile. Well below zero temperatures were recorded after the two previous warm months.

The weather fluctuated throughout April, from unseasonably hot weather to cold, snowy weather. Full scale fieldwork began around the middle of the month but was brought to a sudden halt only a week later due to heavy snow in some areas. In drier fields, producers continued planting as much as possible.

May was a very cool month. A great contrast was shown between the northern and southern parts of the state. Both regions suffered from cold weather, with the northern half receiving the worst end of it. This contrast caused planting in the northern part of the state to be minimal, while planting in the south continued to progress. Pasture and hayfields in the south were greening up and forage fields in the north were having problems breaking dormancy. The cool, dry month also contributed to corn stands being uneven.

During the month of June, weather and crop progress varied across the entire state. Above average temperatures were prevalent throughout the state, as was rain. The warm weather helped improve corn and soybean emergence in the state. The rain received in June was generally welcome for relieving increasingly dry conditions. However, during the last half of June, exceptionally heavy rainfall from slow-moving storm systems caused disastrous flooding in Roseau, Norman, and other counties in the Northwest and North Central Districts.

Early in July warmth and sun pushed crop development to make up for the late planting. By mid-July, crops in flooded areas that were not destroyed, started to make a recovery. In the southern region, fields were suffering from drought. Though light rains crept in during the middle of the month, it was not enough to offset the stress caused by the above average temperatures throughout the month. By late July, hay growth was so slow that livestock producers had to use emergency CRP haying and grazing provisions.

During the month of August, there were seasonably warm days with enough rainfall to return most of the state's soil moisture to adequate. Row crop development and small grain harvest continued near the 5-year averages. Corn denting began moving along well, while oat harvest was 88% completed by Aug 25. Soybeans also completed setting pods by the end of the month.

Soil moisture continued to be adequate in most areas of the state during September. By the end of the month, corn harvest was 4% complete and sweet corn harvest had been completed. Spring wheat, barley, and oats harvest was completed by mid-September and soybean harvest was 25% complete by September 29.

Cool and wet conditions began hindering farmers in the month of October. Due to the cold weather, as well as the first major snow of the year, row crop harvest was slowed. Topsoil moisture ranged from adequate to surplus, causing muddy fields. The soggy conditions caused trucks to become stuck in fields throughout the state. Corn and soybean moisture levels were slow to decline.

November proved to be a very frustrating month, as some farmers wanted to avoid frost to complete tillage while others needed the ground to freeze to complete harvest due to high soil moisture.

The following is a rundown on the production of Minnesota's major crops for 2002:

Minnesota's 2002 **CORN** production at 1,052 million bushels was up 2% from the record high production set in 1998. A record yield of 157.0 bushels per acre was up 27 bushels from 2001.

Record **SOYBEAN** production was estimated at 308.9 million bushels, up 5% from the record high production set in 2000. The final yield was 43.5 bushels per acre, which was up 6.5 bushels from the previous year.

**SPRING WHEAT** production was 61.2 million bushels, down 23% from 2001. The yield of 34.0 bushels per acre was down 10 bushels from 2001.

**OAT** production was estimated at 16.0 million bushels, 27% above 2001. The yield of 56.0 bushels per acre declined 4.0 bushels per acre from the previous year.

**BARLEY** production of 6.4 million bushels was down 19% from 2001 and the lowest level since 1881. Yield at 39.0 bushels per acre was down 16.0 bushels from 2001.

**SUGARBEET** production of 8.85 million tons was up 14% from 2001. Yield was estimated at 18.6 tons per acre, down 2.9 tons from the record high set in 2000.